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REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to require that the alkyl group of the recited alkyl acrylate monomers and alkyl methacrylate monomers contain up to about 18 carbon atoms. Support may be found on page 5, line 19-21. Claim 12 has been amended to place this claim in independent form. Claim 14 has been amended to depend from claim 12. Claim 18 has been amended for purpose of consistency. Claim 21 has been newly added. Support may be found on page 5, line 19-21, the sentence bridging pages 7 and 8 and in the examples. No new matter has been added. Entry is requested.

Claims 1-6 and 8-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by WO 96/08229 and claims 7 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious over WO 96/08229.

The examiner cites WO 96/08229 as disclosing pressure sensitive adhesive compositions comprising an acrylic polymer comprising 40-95 % of one or more A monomers and up to 60% of one or more B monomers. The examiner further notes that the polymer composition of WO 96/08229 is used to form matrices for transdermal drug delivery devices, which devices comprise a backing layer, a matrix layer comprising the composition and a therapeutic agent and a release liner.

In response to applicants' arguments that the copolymer disclosed in WO 96/08229 comprises one or more A monomers, one or more optional B polymers and a macromonomer that is a required and necessary component of the disclosed copolymer, the examiner urges that both the A monomers and the macromonomers of WO 96/08229 read on applicants' alkyl

acrylate and/or alkyl methacrylate monomers.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants' alkyl acrylate and alkyl methacrylate monomers can only have up to about 18 carbon atoms in the alkyl group. Such monomers are not considered in the art to be macromers, as this term is conventionally used in the art and used in the disclosure of the WO 96/08229 patent. Applicants, claims 1-6 and 8-17 are not anticipated by the disclosure of the WO 96/08229 patent. There is no suggestion in the WO 96/08229 disclosure that the macromers are not required and, as such, WO 96/08229 fails to render the invention of claims 7 and 18-20 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Favorable reconsideration, and withdrawal of the Section 102 and 103 rejections over WO 96/08229, is requested.

Claims 1-11 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,077,527 (the '527 patent).

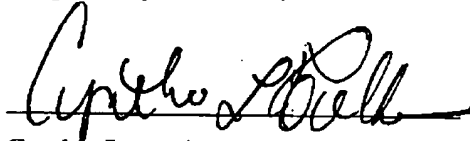
Applicants disagree. Applicants submit that the claimed invention is patentable over the '527 patent. The '527 patent does not disclose *any* acrylic polymer that lacks functional groups containing reactive hydrogen moieties and contains no post-polymerization chemical crosslinker as required in the practice of the claimed invention. Moreover, the '527 patent does not disclose *any* acrylic polymer that contains only alkyl (meth) acrylate monomers and polymerizable non-cyclic nitrogen-containing monomers. All exemplified embodiments of the '527 patent (Examples 1-7 and Comparative Example 8) use vinyl acetate and use acrylic acid as a functional monomer (i.e., a reactive species). Vinyl acetate is an example of a preferred component (ii) monomer, i.e., a monomer having

a Tg of 0 to 250°C (see col. 4, lines 1-3 of the '527 patent). While the '527 patent discloses adhesives containing an acrylic polymer that is prepared from components (i), (ii) and (iii), there is no specific disclosure of an acrylic polymer prepared only from alkyl (meth) acrylate monomers and polymerizable non-cyclic nitrogen-containing monomers so to anticipate the claimed invention.

Favorable reconsideration, and withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,077,527, is requested.

Applicants submit that the application is in condition to be allowed. Early and favorable action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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